



## AICE Newsletter

**February 2016**

*Message from the Editor:*

Greetings from AICE.

You are reading the third issue of the AICE Standard, the monthly newsletter from the Association of International Credential Evaluators®. In these last issues, we shared highlights of our monthly discussions on international credential evaluation issues, including complex credentials, issues with forgery and fraud, and education system updates, among others. As credential evaluators, we rarely find ourselves lacking material for discussions. As such, I am pleased to share yet another edition of the newsletter, featuring the highlights of our most recent forum.

At the recent AICE Forum, one of the topics discussed were professional legal programs from Canada and other countries. As a credential evaluator and trainer in this field, I find professional programs, including law, medicine, dentistry, etc., as some of the more complex, as direct parallels can rarely be drawn between foreign programs and those offered in the United States. The underlying issue, using the legal profession as an example, is that most professional degree programs in law in the United States require a first university degree for admission, whereas most non-US institutions admit students directly after secondary school. As such, neither year counting nor bench-marking provide a direct parallel equivalence. Such professional programs exist at an entirely different level in comparison. As you will see in the discussion, AICE members posited various theories on how to best approach this.

The above is an expansion of one of the topics in the forum highlights in this issue. I'm sharing it in this message to demonstrate the type of discussions in these meetings, and to applaud the organization for providing a regular venue for exploring these issues.

AICE has recently announced trial Affiliate membership to our colleagues at academic institutions. You'll find an invitation in this newsletter. I look forward to sharing this opportunity with university administrators and learning from their perspective. Please consider the trial Affiliate membership, and think about your credential evaluation quandaries that you can bring to the group.

Sincerely,  
Aleks Morawski  
*Director of Evaluation Services*  
*Foreign Credits Inc.*  
*AICE® Forum Highlights*

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## **AICE® Forum Highlights**

This section includes highlights from the monthly AICE® Forum on January 21st, 2016. Although this is meant to serve as a synopsis of the discussion, additional details can be obtained by contacting the Members listed by each topic.

### **Foreign Law Degrees**

In recent years, Canadian institutions have largely made the switch from offering the LLB (Bachelor of Laws) to calling it now a JD (Juris Doctor), similar to the switch made many years ago at American law schools. Based on a recent review of a JD program from an institution that formerly offered the LLB, there doesn't seem to be much that has changed in either program duration or admission requirements (previously, most Canadian institutions would require completion of a first bachelor degree program or at least a pre-law program at the undergraduate level prior to admission into the Bachelor of Laws program; this practice is generally still common across English-speaking provinces in Canada (e.g. Alberta, British Columbia, et al). Most members agree that establishing such programs as a first professional degree, that which allows one to practice law in their country, establishes a benchmark for evaluation as such in the US system. However, many exceptions can be identified, such as Nigeria where some post-bachelor's coursework at the graduate level is required in order to qualify for the professional examination, or those whose content is clearly designed for a first university degree in legal studies, including general education and elective coursework, not inherently present in professional degrees in the United States.

*~ Hany Arafat*

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### **Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India: Updates (current and proposed)**

**Philippines:** The government of the Philippines is instituting new changes to its primary-secondary system where it will now become a twelve-year system as opposed to the former ten-year system. Implementation is scheduled for the 2016-17 school year.

**Bangladesh:** There is a movement to convert three-year Bachelor's degrees to four year programs, purportedly to aid in student mobility abroad. Of note, this was attempted by the Bangladesh's neighboring country, India, where the University of Delhi on extending its 3-year bachelor's to a 4-year was threatened by the University Grants Commission of having its funding withdrawn if it didn't revert to the 3-year bachelor's. University of Delhi acquiesced and scrapped the 4-year bachelor's degree.

**India:** Formerly, the first professional degree in pharmacy was a four-year Bachelor of Pharmacy, and many Indian institutions have since added 1 additional year (a bridge program, if you will) which would then lead to a Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree; in many other cases, the four-year program is being phased out in favor of a five-year Pharm.D. program in India beyond high school graduation.

*~ Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert*

## Provisional Certificates (India, Iran, Egypt)

Many Indian institutions issue provisional certificates to graduates, prior to issuing a formal diploma. This is caused by several factors, including cost, backlog, university scheduling. AICE members reached a consensus, that provisional certificates from India indicate that all degree requirements were met, and are acceptable to demonstrate degree conferral.

In Iran, the situation is quite different. Iranian provisional certificates indicate coursework completion, but not all of the requirements for degree conferral. Most frequently, provisional certificate holders have not completed the required social service component, mandatory military service (for men) or returned the tuition fees advanced by the Iranian government in exchange for the expectation of completing social service.

In Egypt, the provisional certificate is generally accepted by employers and higher education institutions as proof of degree conferral, for purposes of employment or admission into higher degree programs.

*~ Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert, Hany Arafat*

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## Four-year Degrees with significant practical components

In cases when a four-year degree consists of three years of course work and up to one year of practical work or internship, AICE members share the opinion that the degree should be equivalent to a US degree. However, many practical courses or internships, in particular when the degree program is incomplete, would not be accepted as transfer credit at US institutions.

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## China Verification

The Boston Globe recently featured an article about the rampant fraud in Chinese credentials. As a result, many AICE members require CDGDC and CHESSIC certification for all Chinese credentials. The merits of such verification were discussed, reaching a consensus that these organizations can successfully provide verification services for Chinese credentials.

*~ Jasmin Said-Kuehnert*

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## Special Invitation to Connect with AICE:

### Credential Forum

As the Chair of the Membership Committee of the Association of International Credential Evaluators, Inc. (AICE), I would like to extend a special invitation to you to attend our Credentials Discussion Forum as our guest for a three-month trial period. The Discussion Forum teleconference is one of the primary benefits of Affiliate Membership in AICE and is held on the third Thursday of every month at 10:00 am PST / 11:00 am MST / 12:00 pm CST / 1:00 pm EDT. The duration is one hour.

The agenda for our discussion includes but is not limited to international academic credentials at the secondary, tertiary, graduate and post-graduate levels; professional credentials offered in various areas, such as accounting, medicine, dentistry, and nursing; suspicious credential documents; and methods to verify the authenticity of documents from specific sources.

AICE members submit documents for discussion prior to each forum. These documents are then forwarded to all forum participants prior to the meeting, along with the monthly agenda, enabling each person to review and discuss the documents for that month. Once you confirm your interest in participating, AICE will email you the conference call information and the monthly agenda. You will also be invited to submit any documents that you would like to discuss.

I can tell you that the University of West Georgia and the University of Idaho both decided to become Affiliate Members of AICE after participating in only one of our Credential Discussion Forums. That speaks to how helpful they are! We invite you to visit our website <http://aice-eval.org> to learn more about becoming an Affiliate Member and contributing your voice to the creation of standards within the international education community.

Please let me know if you have questions regarding AICE membership or if you would like to participate in an upcoming Credentials Discussion Forum as our guest. You may reach me by email at [beth.aice01@gmail.com](mailto:beth.aice01@gmail.com).

Sincerely,  
Beth Cotter  
*President*  
*Foreign Credential Evaluation, Inc. (Endorsed Member of AICE®)*

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## Professional Development and Events

### AICE Phoenix Symposium, March 23-24, 2016

AICE cordially invites you to collaborate with other evaluators as we discuss the need for standards in our industry. The AICE Phoenix Symposium will benefit you by increasing your knowledge of sound evaluation practices, connecting you with others in the industry with whom you can discuss evaluation questions and problems, offering you access to an ongoing forum in which to compare and analyze educational credentials, and increasing your confidence in the reliability of credential evaluation reports which you produce and which you receive from others.

**REGISTER NOW**

**RESERVE ROOM**

For more information, please contact Beth Cotter at [beth\\_cotter@fceptlanata.com](mailto:beth_cotter@fceptlanata.com).

Click here for: [AICE Symposium Overview](#)

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For additional information on AICE membership options or members, please contact us at: [info@alice-eval.org](mailto:info@alice-eval.org) or visit our website at: [www.alice-eval.org](http://www.alice-eval.org)

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